



## ACADEMIC BOARD

**CONFIRMED**

Minutes of the Academic Board held on Wednesday 3 July, 2019.

**Present:** Paul Bennett, Martin Boddy, Elizabeth Cleaver, Peter Clegg, Marc Griffiths, (for Steven Neill), Lisa Harrison, Catherine Hobbs, James Lee, Elena Marco, Candida McCabe, Fidel Meraz, Ray McDowell (for Donna Whitehead), Christopher Moore, James Murphy, Jane Ojiako, Paul Olomolaiye, Jane Roscoe, Jeanette Sakel, Precious Onyenekwu Tatah, Sarah Todd, Callum Tucker, Steven West (Chair) Neil Willey, Aylwin Yafele.

**In attendance:** Jodie Anstee, Rachel Cowie, Katie Jenkins, Heather Moyes (Secretary), Derek Norris, Amanda Oliver (Deputy Secretary)

**Apologies:** Jason Briddon, Sally Clark, Sanja Dogramadzi, Sonja Dragojlovic – Oliveira, Chris Gledhill, Jane Harrington, Jo Midgley, Carinna Parraman, Nicholas Ryder, Rosie Scott Ward, Patricia Voaden.

### **AB 19.07.1 WELCOME and APOLOGIES**

AB 19.07.1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and announced the following apologies:

Jason Briddon, Sally Clark, Sanja Dogramadzi, Sonja Dragojlovic – Oliveira, Chris Gledhill, Jane Harrington, Jo Midgley, Carinna Parraman, Nicholas Ryder, Rosie Scott-Ward and Patricia Voaden.

AB 19.07.1.2 He also welcomed Clive Lewis, a member of the Board of Governors, as an observer.

### **AB 19.07.2 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING NOT ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA** *Papers AB19/07/01 and Papers AB19/07/02 were received.*

AB 19.07.2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 15 May, 2019 were **approved** as a true and accurate record.

AB 19.07.2.2 There were no matters arising from the list of actions.

### **AB 19.07.3 ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION**

AB 19.07.3.1 **Nominee on the Board of Governors**  
*Paper AB 19/07/03 was received*

AB 19.07.3.1.2 Academic Board approved Aylwin Yafele as the Academic Board nominee on the Board of Governors.

**AB 19.07.3.2 Update from the Vice-Chancellor**

*Paper AB 19/07/04 was received*

AB 19.07.3.2.1 The Vice-Chancellor informed Academic Board that:

- There was still uncertainty over the adoption of the recommendations in the Augar report. While UUK and the mission groups were engaged in political lobbying to understand more, the report was not a political priority in the current climate. He advised that the senior team had considered early modelling of the potential impacts and had also identified mitigating actions. He also reported that the current view across the sector was that any fee reduction would not be compensated for by a Treasury grant.
- Further Education Colleges (FECs) were engaged in discussions with commissioners on the sector's sustainability and the Department for Education was interested in exploring partnership models between High Education Institutions and FECs.
- Planning was underway to transition from Strategy 2020 to Strategy 2030, with work progressing throughout the 2019/20 academic year. He informed members that Academic Board and its sub-committees would be engaged in the development stages as appropriate and a timeline would be presented to the October meeting. Supporting strategies were being developed and a number of strategic projects and programmes would continue into the Strategy 2030 period.
- The University had climbed to 28<sup>th</sup> in the Guardian university league table, its highest ever position, and fourth consecutive rise.
- The University had maintained its excellent performance in the National Student Survey and congratulated the 17 programmes that received 100% satisfaction rating. He commended staff on the fantastic results and recognised the need for further improvements to reach the 2020 target of 82% of subjects being in the top 2 quartiles nationally.
- The University was entering an important phase in the Mental Wealth Strategy and was participating in the Universities UK 'Mental Health: A whole university approach' event on 11 July. Delegates would consider the outcomes of the pilot step-change framework at UWE Bristol, Cardiff University and the University of York. He also reported that a review document and progress update had been produced, which would be made available to Academic Board and staff.

**ACTION: Vice-Chancellor**

**AB 19.07.3.3**

**Strategy 2030**

*Paper AB 19/07/05 was received*

AB 19.05.3.2.1

The Chair reported that further revisions had been made to the Strategy, reflecting comments and feedback from Academic Board and Directorate, in May. He reported that:

- Strategy case studies were being finalized which would help to ensure that the strategy reflected the "lived experience".

- The final strategy would be considered at the joint meeting of Academic Board and the Board of Governors the following day with a view to final approval planned at the Board of Governors meeting that afternoon.
- A communications plan would support the Strategy launch and would recognize the need to engage diverse audiences and align with ongoing work on the University's brand.
- Strategy 2030 would inform the planning cycle commencing September 2019.

**ACTION: Vice-Chancellor/ Head of Policy and Strategy**

**Review of Academic Governance (Tabled Paper)**

*Paper AB 19/07/06 was received*

**AB 19.07.3.4.**

AB 19.07.3.4.1 The Director of Student and Academic Services presented proposals for changes to the academic governance structure for implementation in the 2019/20 academic year, which Academic Board was asked to consider and approve.

AB 19.07.3.4.2 Members heard that the proposals took into account findings of the external review of academic governance considered by Academic Board in October 2018, and were designed to meet the requirements of the changing regulatory environment in terms of providing assurance to the Board of Governors, as well as to facilitate the successful delivery of Strategy 2030.

AB 19.07.3.4.3 Members were advised that the structure itself had not changed significantly, but that the changes would enable more connected decision-making and transparency in the conduct of committee business. Emphasis was placed on the important of having a structure which supports clear decision-making, facilitates robust scrutiny and enables more effective partnership working with students.

AB 19.07.3.4.4 Members were thanked for their responses to the recently concluded consultation exercise and were advised that all issues raised had been addressed. This included:

- Changes to the membership of some committees;
- The addition of elected staff representatives to the membership of Faculty Boards;
- The removal of the proposed Research Governance Committee, with the sub-committees reporting to the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee remaining unchanged.

AB 19.07.3.4.5 It was also reported that a response had been sent directly to the Students' Union, confirming that its staff could attend committee meetings in order to support student representatives, but could not be members or attendees in their own right as the Students' Union was a separate organisation.

AB 19.07.3.4.6 In the course of discussion, members raised concerns about:

- The short timescales for agreeing the proposals in order to enable implementation for 2019/20;
- The proposed memberships and reporting lines of some committees;
- The appropriateness of bringing strategy implementation groups into the academic governance structure as formal committees and the impact on

agility of decision-making, particularly for RKEC which considered the current arrangements to be effective;

- Being asked to approve the structure on the basis of summary descriptions of the responsibilities of each committee, rather than full Terms of Reference.

It was also suggested that a diagram illustrating the differences between the current and proposed structures might be helpful.

AB 19.07.3.4.7 Members noted that the structure would be tested throughout the next academic year and evaluated at the end of 2019/20. It was agreed that it would be beneficial for all committees to include a review of the effectiveness of the new arrangements as a standing item on the agenda of each meeting in support of this work.

AB 19.07.3.4.8

AB 19.07.3.4.9 Members agreed that further work was required to address the issues raised and that it would not be appropriate to sign off the structure at this stage. The possibility of delaying the implementation of the new structure until the start of calendar year 2020 to allow more time to reflect on the changes was considered, as was a proposal for a single item extraordinary meeting of the Board during the summer vacation period, with a view to signing off the proposals for implementation in October.

Members agreed that:

- AB 19.07.3.4.10
- (i) discussions on the structure would continue over the summer to resolve any outstanding questions and allow time to provide additional information to members;
  - (ii) the Chair would take a decision on whether to convene an extraordinary meeting of the Board in late August/ early September with a view to implementation from September 2019, or to present them to an ordinary meeting during the Autumn term for implementation from January 2020.

**ACTION: Director of Student and Academic Services/Chair**

As a result, it was agreed that consideration of the Committee Calendar for 2019/20 should be removed from the agenda.

AB 19.07.3.11  
**AB 19.07.4**

**Academic Regulatory Review report and updates to the 19/20 academic regulations.**

*Paper AB 19/07/07 was received*

AB 19.07.4.1 Academic Board was asked to:

- approve updates for inclusion in the Academic Regulations, procedures and codes of practice for 2019 – 2020.
- discuss three proposals for further changes from the Academic Quality and Regulation Operational Group and advise as to whether further work to explore them should be undertaken.
- advise on the direction of travel of review of the Academic Regulatory Framework.

AB 19.07.4.1.2 The Committee approved minor changes to the regulations governing postgraduate research degrees on the recommendation of the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee.

**Action: Academic Regulations and Policy Manager**

AB 19.07.4.1.3 The Chair advised that a paper summarising proposed updates to the Academic Regulations for 2019/2020 and requesting consideration of some potential further changes was not included in the Board packs. He provided a summary of the key changes for 2019/20 and asked for initial views on the proposed amendments to:

- The credit requirements for the March;
- The timescales for academic appeals relating to personal circumstance decisions – to allow students to appeal against a decision ahead of exam board;
- The Glossary of terms – removal of the reference to “core modules”;
- The regulations for the BSc Nursing – to permit a variant regulation to allow recognition of prior learning in line with new NMC standards;
- The Personal Circumstances Code of Practice - to remove the requirement for evidence for applications relating to missed assessments and removal of marks,

AB 19.07.4.1.4 He also outlined potential further changes not specifically intended for implementation in 2019/20 on which Academic Board’s advice was sought, namely:

- To allow for extensions beyond five working days in certain exceptional cases;
- To allow for variant regulations for reasons other than to meet a professional body requirement;
- To establish a process for enabling variations to regulations for specific modules.

AB 19.07.4.1.5 In the course of discussion members questioned the proposals to remove the requirement for evidence for Personal Circumstances and to allow extensions beyond five working days. In particular, concern was expressed that such changes would result in an increase in the volume of students using the Personal Circumstances Procedure and undertaking resits and would create significant challenges for academic staff in terms of managing assessments and marking.

AB 19.07.4.1.6 Members agreed that the missing paper would be circulated following the meeting for further consideration and feedback, with a final decision remitted to Chair’s action in time to allow publication of the 2019/20 academic regulations as normal on 1 August.

**ACTION: Deputy Secretary/ Secretary/ Chair**

AB 19.07.4.1.7 With regard to the direction of travel of wider review of the Academic Regulations, members recognised that the update report included some very strong and positive elements but some elements required additional work.

In particular, the Board asked for further work to be undertaken on the indicative proposals in relation to:

- Removal of capping from resits and retakes

- Classification algorithms
- Accredited learning

Academic Board were informed that a communications plan would support the changes and a summary of the agreed revisions to the Regulations would be presented to Academic Board in October.

**ACTION: Deputy Secretary and Regulatory Manager**

**AB 19.07.4.2**

**Proposed name change**

*Paper AB 19/07/08*

This item was removed from the agenda.

**AB 19.07.4.3**

**Learning Materials in Advance Policy**

*Paper AB 19/07/09 was received*

AB 19.07.4.3.1

The Director of Learning and Teaching reported that the draft policy was presented to LTSEC on 12 June 2019. Members heard that:

- The policy reaffirms and codifies a decision by LTSEC and Academic Board in February 2016, which has not yet been adopted fully across the University;
- The draft policy would be revised further, with section 3 removed and instead embedded in the associated guidance, and would be put before LTSEC for final consideration at the start of the academic year 2019-20;
- The Associate Deans for Learning and Teaching in each Faculty will then work with the Academic Practice Directorate to ensure full adherence to the policy by the end of academic year 2019-20.

AB 19.07.4.3.2

Academic Board discussed and endorsed LTSEC's proposals.

**AB 19.07.5**

**REPORTS AND UPDATES**

**AB 19.07.5.1**

**Annual Report of the Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee 2018-2019**

*Paper AB 19/07/10 was received*

AB 19.07.5.1.1

The Deputy Director (Policy and Student Experience) confirmed the assurance provided in the reported reflected current practice, however, advised that the report would be presented differently next year recognising the need to align the content with OfS guidance, changes following the Academic Governance review and ongoing work on the annual report framework.

AB 19.07.5.1.2

Academic Board agreed that LTSEC has appropriately discharged its responsibilities.

**AB 19.07.5.2**

**Annual Report URKEC**

*Paper AB 19/07/11 was received*

AB 19.07.5.2.1

The PVC Research and Enterprise reported that the full URKEC Annual Report would be made available to members over the summer and a summary of the feedback would be presented to the October meeting. In the meantime, the report of the Graduate School was presented.

## **ACTION: PVC Research and Enterprise**

AB 19.07.5.2.3 The Director of the Graduate School informed members that during 2018-2019, total UWE PGR numbers continued to be an upward trend and PGR satisfaction in the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) was 82% (around the benchmark figure). He also reported an increase in externally funded PGR from non-academic partners, from research councils and from doctoral loans and significant progress was made in offering a flexible format for PhD submissions. He noted that to further increase satisfaction in PRES results more work and investment would be required which the University needs to agree.

AB 19.07.5.2.4 The Chair commended the Director on the upward trend and the report presentation.

## **AB 19.07.6 STANDING ITEMS**

### **AB 19.07.6.1 Update from UWE Student Representatives**

Members received an update from the President and Vice President: Education of the Students' Union (SU) on SU achievements during 2018/19 covering:

- AB 19.07.6.1.1
- Success in the EAUC Green Gown Awards for Student Engagement ("Bring your own bowl")
  - The International Women's week campaign, which was highly commended at the NUS Women's Conference
  - Retaining Responsible Futures Accreditation
  - UWE RAG being shortlisted in the 2018 National Student Awards for:
    - Event of the year
    - Campaign of the Year - Movember
    - Most improved Student Fundraising Group
  - The SU hosting the BUCS National Conference for the second consecutive year and it marking the 50<sup>th</sup> year of BUCS.

- AB 19.07.6.1.2 They also gave highlights from the President's team on:
- Multicultural week
  - Supporting international students
  - Trip to Auschwitz
  - Work with final year students to continue their exemption from Council Tax until the end of June
  - Feel Good February
  - UWE Bristol Talent Show

AB 19.07.6.1.3 The Chair congratulated all involved for the great work and success achieved.

## **AB 19.07.7 ITEMS TO NOTE**

AB 19.07.7.1 **Academic Committee Calendar 2019/20** (Tabled Paper AB 19/07/12)  
This item was removed.

AB 19.07.7.2 **Minutes of Sub-Committees.**  
Members noted that the minutes from LTSEC and RKEC were available on the website.

**AB 19.07.8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**AB 19.07.8.1 Nominations for Emeritus Professor**  
Paper AB 19/07/13 was received

**AB 19.07.8.1.1** Members approved the nomination of Professor Gaynor Attwood for Professor Emerita but requested additional information before approving two other applications. Academic Board remitted a final decision to Chair's action, subject to receiving further information and additional assurance.

**ACTION: Chair/ Deputy Secretary**

**AB 19.05.8.2 Items of any other business**  
None were raised.

**DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

**All meetings scheduled will be held from 14:00 – 17:00**

**Wednesday 9 October 2019**  
**Wednesday 4 December 2019**  
**Wednesday 26 February 2020**  
**Wednesday 13 May 2020**  
**Wednesday 1 July 2020**

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